



VENOM SS

ROBERT AND DANIELLE PETERS CREATE THEIR OWN MODIFIED MUSTANG

Text and Photos by Robert Peters

I was 14 years old when I first saw a 1964 1/2 Mustang on the streets in my hometown and have loved them ever since. I thought they were innovative, stylish, fast, and cool. I knew that sooner or later I would have to own one.

By the time I graduated from high school in 1968, I had seen pictures of a red '69 Mach 1 in a magazine. Someone once told me that if I wanted something bad enough, and I concentrated hard enough, I would find a way to make my wish come true. I cut the picture out of the magazine, put it in my wallet, and looked at it every morning and every night. To save money for the down payment, I picked up pop bottles and turned them in for 2 cents each, and put up hay for my cousin for 2 cents a bale. We had to put up 2,000 bales a day in order to make \$40. So, needless to say it took me several months to save up for the down payment.

In October 1968, I went to a dealership in St. Joseph, Missouri, and proudly ordered my first new car—a red '69 Mach 1 and gave them my life's saving, in cash, which amounted to \$600.

I ordered Candy Apple Red, with white interior, a 351 Windsor engine, 4-speed, and no air. The car cost a total of \$3671. I took delivery in early December 1968. It was the hottest car on the road! Some people in Northwest Missouri didn't even know what kind of car it was, but I made sure they soon found out.

Back in those days, manufacturers told you to follow break-in procedures. I did that as quick as I could, and when I hit 2,000 miles, I was out drag racing. I lived in a farming community. We would all get together on Friday and Saturday nights and decide where we would race. Usually it was a long 2-mile stretch near Craig, Missouri. We would put one person on each end with walkie-talkies to watch for traffic and the dreaded Missouri "Hy-Po." We never had a wreck, no one ever got hurt, and no one ever got a ticket.

I had the privilege of drag racing some of the hottest muscle cars around. There were 289 high-performance Mustangs, Super Bees, Challengers, Road

Runners, GTX's, GTO's, and Corvettes. You get the picture! I didn't beat them all, but I had the most fun of my life, bangin' gears, smellin' that rubber burn, and goin' as fast as I could through that quarter mile (which at that time was five telephone poles). I loved that car!

Eventually, I sold that Mach 1. Since then I've had numerous Mustangs, including a 1972 1/2 Sprint, '83 Mustang GT, '97 Mustang, two '99's and a 2000.

When I saw pictures of the new body style of the 2005 Mustangs it reminded me a lot of my '69 Mach 1. As I'd done years before. I kept the picture, and my wife, Danielle, and I looked at it often, trying to find a way to make our wish come true. This time it wasn't quite as difficult as the first. It took us about 20 minutes to decide what to do. We sold our '99 Corvette on eBay.

My wife and I went to a dealership in Lee's Summit, Missouri, and ordered a Torch Red 2005 Mustang GT, loaded with all the bells and whistles. I immediately began searching the web for aftermarket parts. We ordered pre-painted quarter window scoops, side scoops, a hood scoop, and a ducktail spoiler. Two weeks went by and I had all these parts displayed in our living room! Three weeks later, we went back to get a VIN

for our insurance company and found out that the order had never been sent in. We were told by this dealership that the '05 GT production had been stopped and that we would have to wait 6 to 8 months for a 2006 GT. We went into panic mode. All these parts were sitting in the living room, and we had no car to install them on.

We rushed back home, and I got on the net and searched 186 web sites looking for "my" GT. No luck! I had to have the first year of the body change, no matter what. So, we decided to search for a V6. I found three that were Torch Red, loaded, and with red leather interior. One was in Ohio, one in Florida, and one was in Dallas, Texas. Since we live about 50 miles from Kansas City, Missouri, the Dallas, Texas, dealership was closest for us. I called the dealership on a Friday morning and talked to a salesman named Yah-Yah who told me that Troy Aikman, former quarterback for the Dallas Cowboys, owned the dealership. He confirmed that they still had the car, and to our surprise, would hold it until we could come down to get it. No money down, no credit card numbers. It as great!

Yah-Yah didn't have to hold it very long. We made arrangements and were in Dallas the next Saturday morning. The car was beautiful! We signed the papers, made the down payment, and called a rental company to reserve a trailer so we didn't have to put any miles on the car, which had 3.6 miles on it.

We were told that our 2001 Explorer was deemed unsafe for towing by the rental company. We had no choice but to drive it home. The only one who was happy about that was my wife, because she got to drive it all the way. To add to the excitement of the day, Troy Aikman was at the dealership that day. He took pictures with us, signed T-shirts, and a football. He was great!

Two days after we got the Mustang home, I had all the new parts on it. We decided to enter our brand new car in our first car show in Richmond, Missouri. We received one of the "Top 25" awards and have been hooked on car shows from that point on.

To keep pressure on the competition, my wife and I took it upon ourselves to stay on the "cutting edge" of style. We saw a picture from a New York car show that featured the new 2007 Shelby GT 500 in Torch Red with big, wide white stripes. It had no scoops, no spoilers, and lacked some styling features that we thought a Shelby should have. We were on a mission! We had a purpose!

We ordered front and rear GT bumper covers, including fog lights. We had a sign company make vinyl stripes to our specifications, and we ordered a new set of 2003 Cobra R, 18-inch chrome wheels with 255 R45 tires. We installed all these parts ourselves and went to another car show. It was a small show, but, much to our surprise, we brought home a first place trophy. The car show fever was raging.



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The Peters' V6 Mustang before they turned it into their Venom SS.

Since then we have added dual exhaust, stainless steel headers, completely detailed the engine, including painting the valve covers. We installed a plenum cover, billet strut caps, red cold air intake, and covered all the wires with chrome, red and black plastic covers. We also installed a brushed aluminum dash kit, chrome cup and shifter bezels, and aluminum grill inserts. To top it off, we installed a Boy Racer rear wing. To keep it looking good underneath as well as on the top, I jack this car up by hand, put it on jack stands, and wax the entire undercarriage.

We continue our hobby of attending car shows almost every weekend. We decided our car needed a unique name, so we christened it the Mustang "Venom

SS." We really never expect to win at a car show for the simple reason that we did all this work ourselves and find ourselves up against some of the most beautiful cars around. I guess that's why we aren't judges because most of the time we probably wouldn't put ourselves in the top three. We must have done something right, because we continue to place at all judged shows.

In March of 2007, we traveled to Slater, Missouri, about 20 miles north of Columbia, for a non-judged car show. Slater is the home town of Steve McQueen! They have Steve McQueen days every March. When we found out that his widow, Barbara was going to be there to do a book signing, we asked permission to have her do a special

signing for us. We were asked to wait in a little room for her. When she finished the book signing and came in to the room, she looked at me and said, 'what do you want?' It was pretty funny as she was very nice. I told her that I would greatly appreciate a signature, but not on a book, on my Mustang. She was surprised and told us she didn't sign many cars, but she did see one outside she was 'drooling over'! I asked her if it was red with white stripes, she said 'YES!, I'll sign it for you right away.'

We are slowly building our confidence in hopes of attending our first national Mustang competition. It's been an awesome experience so far, and I know it can only get better. **MT**



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